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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION - JANUARY 11 UPDATE ON KUWAITI MEDIA
COVERAGE OF VIOLENCE IN GAZA

REF: 11 Kuwait 09, 1253 KUWAIT 08

SUMMARY

Sunday, January 11, 2009

¶1. (U) Summary and Comment. As of Sunday, January 11, all Kuwaiti Arabic and English language print dailies continued to publish headlines and pictures related to the ongoing situation in Gaza. In addition to the continued front page news updates, a number of columnists criticized the Bush Administration for recently posting a story about the death of the White House cat on the White House website while the violence in Gaza continued. End Summary and Comment.

¶2. (U) Block quotes:

--The moderate Arabic language daily Al-Qabas published a letter by Mohammed Al-Saleh written on behalf of the children of Gaza and addressed to President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush. In the letter, Mr. Al-Saleh criticized their decision to mourn a cat when people in Gaza are dying from the Israeli aggression. He sarcastically (01/11): "offered to bury the deceased cat in Tel Aviv to remain a symbol of Bush's loyalty to Israel."

--The Editorial Section of the conservative Al-Watan Arabic daily included an Op-Ed by Mr. Nabeel Al-Awadhi, an Islamic preacher and known critic of U.S. policy, where he commented on the White House statement about the death of the Bush family cat (01/08): "At times when people are mourning the death of innocent children and civilians in Gaza, the White House issues a statement mourning the death of a cat. This is because they have no respect for the dignity of Muslims. God damn them, their allies, and anyone who supports them."

--Conservative Salafi writer Dr. Wael Hassawi, said in his regular column in the moderate Al-Rai (01/08): "The Israeli secret service website issued a report on Arab writers who supported Israel in its current aggression on Gaza. Amongst those were four famous Kuwaiti writers. We ask the government, and the Kuwaiti Journalists' Association take a decisive position on those who have ruined Kuwait's image, and Islam by cooperating with the Jews, and by back-stabbing their fellow Palestinians in critical times."

--Regular columnist in the conservative Arabic daily Al-Watan Dr. Abdullah Al-Hadlaq criticized Hamas as well as the Arab silence towards Israeli operations in Gaza. Dr. Hadlaq said (01/08): "You can fool some people all the time, you can fool all people sometimes, but you cannot fool all people all the time. This is what Hamas is trying to do. Hamas has adopted the slogan Fighting

the Israeli Enemy. I wonder if this is what Palestinians want?
 Hamas has lost its supporters, because no Arab country agrees with
 its policies and stances."

--On the last page of the moderate Arabic daily Al-Rai, Salafi
 columnist Wael Al-Hassawi examined the reasons behind Israel's power
 as compared to Arab states. Headlined 'The reasons behind Israel's
 power,' it states (01/11): "Israel has taken advantage of all
 possible means of power since its establishment. They have excelled
 in manufacturing and had reached the level of the top producers and
 exporters in the world, they have developed their agriculture
 sector, have stolen water sources, and have not ignored their
 military armaments."

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